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RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 3073
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RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIRUT 001300

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ELA, IO/UNP, EUR/SCE
ALSO FOR IO ACTING A/S HOOK, PDAS WARLICK
P FOR DRUSSELL AND RRANGASWAMY
USUN FOR KHALILZAD/WOLFF/SCHEDLBAUER
NSC FOR ABRAMS/RAMCHAND/YERGER/MCDERMOTT

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [UNGA](#) [UN](#) [LE](#) [SY](#) [IS](#) [IZ](#) [KV](#)

SUBJECT: LEBANON: MFA PROVIDES LITTLE COMMENT TO UNGA, ARAB
LEAGUE DEMARCHES

REF: A. SECSTATE 91908

[1](#)B. SECSTATE 93939

[1](#)C. SECSTATE 93981

Classified By: Ambassador Michele J. Sison for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. C) Poloff delivered points on Kosovo, the Arab League Ministerial, and the UN Third Committee on Human Rights to Oussama Khachab, Head of the Americas Desk at the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on September 4. Khachab said he would relay the points to other offices within the Foreign Ministry and to the Lebanese mission at the UN. For all UN matters, Khachab stressed that the GOL prefers to coordinate with other Arab and Islamic countries before taking a position.

[1](#)2. (C) Khachab expected some discussion of the Lebanese political situation at the Arab League ministerial. However, he deemed unlikely progress on implementation of UNSCR 1701 due to Israel's recent statements about Lebanon. On other diplomatic issues, Khachab believed the Lebanese Charge d'Affaires in Iraq would be upgraded to an ambassadorial position. In addition, he expected both Lebanon and Syria to exchange ambassadors before the end of 2008. On domestic issues, Khachab called President Sleiman "dynamic" and hard-working. The National Dialogue, he predicted, would not begin before the start of the UN General Assembly. End summary.

KOSOVO

[1](#)3. (C) Khachab was aware of the Serbian resolution seeking an International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on Kosovo (Ref A). He stated that the GOL prefers to coordinate with other Arab and Islamic countries before taking a position. Other offices within the ministry, such as European Affairs and International Organizations, Khachab said, are in the process of developing the GOL position. He offered to provide an update to the Embassy prior to the start of the UN General Assembly (UNGA).

ARAB LEAGUE MINISTERIAL

[1](#)4. (C) The September 8-9 Arab League Ministerial (Ref B) will

be an opportunity for Lebanon to coordinate with its Arab partners on upcoming UNGA resolutions, Khachab said. He expected an update of the political situation in Lebanon to be on the meeting's agenda. However, Khachab was skeptical there would be any developments on full implementation of UNSCR 1701. Khachab admitted that there is still work to be done, but, he said, Israel's statements about holding the GOL accountable for Hizballah's actions and Israeli overflights were not helping.

15. (C) Khachab reported that Lebanon maintains a Charge d'Affaires in Baghdad. He said it was likely the chief of mission position would be upgraded to an Ambassador. However, he did not indicate any specific timeframe. On the U.S. request that the Arab League reconsider supporting Syria's candidacy to join the IAEA Board of Governors, Khachab said he would pass the message.

16. (C) Bilaterally, Khachab predicted Lebanon and Syria would exchange ambassadors probably before the end of 2008.

UN THIRD COMMITTEE 2008
HUMAN RIGHTS PRIORITIES

17. (C) Khachab made no substantive comment about the UN Third Committee on Human Rights (Ref C). Again, he offered to provide an update to the Embassy if the GOL defines its position before UNGA.

KHACHAB ON SLEIMAN

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18. (C) President Sleiman, Khachab said, is "dynamic" and hard-working. He believed Sleiman was considering carefully the requests to the expand the participation in the National Dialogue process, but had not made a final decision. The National Dialogue, he predicted, would not convene until after Sleiman returned from New York and Washington.
SISON